

**King County Agriculture Commission
Minutes from April 13, 2006
Mercer View Community Center
Mercer Island WA**

Commissioners Present: Nancy Hutto, George Irwin, Bob Tidball, Ben Kodama, Grant Davidson, Ewing Stringfellow, Dick Gradwohl, Michael Blakely, Roger Calhoon

New Nominee Commissioners: Bob Vos, Larry Pickering, Judy Taylor, Rob Holland

Staff: Steve Evans, Judy Herring, Claire Dyckman, Bill Eckel, King County (KC) Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) Agriculture Programs;

Guest Agency Staff: Josh Monahan, King Conservation District (KCD); Sylvia Kantor, Washington State University Extension (WSU) KC; Bob Burns, Deputy Director, DNRP.

Guests: Marilyn Cope, staff, King County Council; Jeff McMorris, staff, Councilmember Kathy Lambert; Marguerite Southerland, P.L.A.N; Will Knedlik, IMGA; Don Marshall, Chuck McWilliams, Lake Washington Technical College; Will Knedlik, IMGA

Nancy Hutto called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes: The Commission approved the minutes of the March meeting.

Commission Roundabout:

Nancy Hutto: installing new hives. Grant Davidson: still managing the opening of five markets. Roger Calhoon: filling his greenhouses, planting next week. Ewing Stringfellow: harrowing fields, providing habitat for moles. Has 20 steers on grass pastures at present. Bob Tidball: Worst infestation of chickweed he has seen on his strawberries. Bringing in niece to farm. Michelle Blakely: is moving Growing Things to a new farm in the Ames Creek Basin, in partnership with the Puget Consumers Coop.

New Commissioner Nominees: The new nominees introduced themselves: Judy Taylor: adding lavender to her sheep and goat enterprise, investigating whether to get organic certification. Judy was once chair of the Agriculture Commission. Rob Holland: urban gardener, laying out plots for greens that are sold at church. Rob is interested in growers on the urban edge and connecting growers with markets. Bob Vos: tending a new litter of eleven Ridgeback pups on his organic beef farm. Bob is interested in rural agricultural land use issues, among other items. Larry Pickering: keeping up with his large animal veterinary practice that operates out of Woodinville. Leases land for horticulture on the family farm.

Commission Business:

Decisions Made:

Motion: George Irwin moved and Bob Tidball seconded that the chair sign the letters as drafted to Senators Murray and Cantwell, asking them to support the budget for the Farm and Rangeland Protection Program in the 2007 Farm Bill. Motion passed.

Motion: George Irwin moved and Michael Blakely seconded that the Commission endorse the proposal put forth by the Lake Washington Technical College and Bob Burns, Deputy Director of DNRP, that the County and the Technical College buy Parcel B of the Muller Farm and work with Lake Washington Soccer Association to effectively use parcel C. Discussion ensued. Bob

Tidball wanted to underscore that the use allowed is for an agricultural training facility and not for an educational facility. It was also suggested that the partners pursue an affidavit addressing water rights with the Department of Ecology. Motion passed.

Motion: Michael Blakely moved and George Irwin seconded that a letter be written promptly to the King County Prosecuting Attorney and the King County Roads Division to express the displeasure of the Commission at the chilling effect of the way in which papers were served on a fellow Commissioner who was at the table, speaking in public. An apology was to be requested. Copies were to be sent to the King County Council, the Executive, and Mr. Stringfellow. Motion passed.

Recommendations:

The Commission informally agreed that:

- Workshops for farmers on how to approach the permit process should be held outside the growing season; include farmers as presenters (Burr Moseby); advertise directly at feed stores, the sales barn, and to CAPR, and include a session for participants to talk about how the regulations need to be revised.
- The response to the Director's questions should be addressed by the Program Committee, not the Regulatory Committee.
- The Committee should tell management: The perceived overlap of Extension, the KCD, and the County Ag Program is an issue of budgets. Do the managers look at it as overlap, or reasonable coordination? They may overlap, but it is not in negative ways. Co-sponsoring events is good. We see that they are very creative in cobbling money together. Are the agencies doing parallel items or simply sharing resources? If they are following their mandates, this should not be an issue. I do not see "we do livestock management better...".
- The Vashon Commission Meeting should be advertised as a Listening Session, and the field trip include lavender farms, a presentation by Misty Isles on their beef operation, the sheep dog demonstration.

Chair Report: Nancy Hutto attended the meeting of the Cascade Agenda that focused on the future agriculture and open space for the next 100 years. Nancy reported that King County appeared to be ahead of others in preserving farmland, but that we still need water and farmers! Her perception is that the function of the Cascade Agenda is primarily connecting people and acting as a lobbying power. They will have other meetings and want to know what they can do to help sustain agriculture.

Staff Report: Steve Evans reported that the next meeting of the Regulatory Committee would be discussing proposed changes to the zoning code related to wineries. Judy Herring asked that the Commission approve a letter (below).

Agency Reports:

King Conservation District (KCD) Josh Monaghan reported on several items:

- The KCD Board election resulted in Bobbi Lindemulder being reelected as a Supervisor.
- Five public meetings are being held on the topic of the KCD assessment for 2007 to find out what residents want from their tax assessment funds. These will be followed by five public hearings on a specific proposal for the assessment, with the goal of having a proposal by mid-July.

- the Farm Plan Privacy Bill was passed by the Washington State Legislature. The KCD is looking at how this will affect the treatment of voluntary farm plans compared to farm plans that have some relation to regulatory frameworks.

- there is still some uncertainty about the funding of a future Small Farm Expo.

Washington State University (WSU) Extension Sylvia Kantor reported on three items:

- with significant help from the King and Pierce Conservation Districts, the Small Farm Expo was again a success - with 1500 attendees!

- thanks also to funding from the King Conservation District, the Harvest Celebration will be held this October. Andrea Meier has been hired to coordinate the event.

- a variety of extension classes are being offered.

Public Comment: None

Commission Follow-Up: Claire reported that the KCD, DDES and WLRD were working together to address the issues at the Keller dairy.

Nancy Hutto adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.